

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 11419

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MX

SUBJECT: GARCIA ROBLES REPLACES RABASA AS FOREIGN SECRETARY

REF MEXICO 11410

1. TEXT OF EMILIO RABASA'S RESIGNATION AS FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS NOW RPT NOW BEEN MADE PUBLIC: "MR. PRESIDENT, BY THIS MEANS I FIND MYSELF IN THE PAINFUL NECESSITY (PENOSA OBLIGACION) OF PRESENTING TO YOU MY FORMAL AND IRREVOCABLE RESIGNATION FROM THE CHARGE OF SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. (ACCEPT) MY PERMANENT GRATITUDE FOR HAVING BESTOWED UPON ME ON DEC. 1, 1970 THE HIGHEST HONOR WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED IN MY LIFE. SINCERELY, EMILIO O. RABASA."

2. TEXT OF PRESIDENT EHCEVERRIA'S LETTER ACCEPTING RABASA'S RESIGNATION WAS AS FOLLOWS: "I RECEIVED TODAY YOUR COURTEOUS COMMUNICATION IN WHICH YOU MADE KNOWN TO ME YOUR DECISION TO RESIGN THE POST OF SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS WHICH YOU HAVE OCCUPIED SINCE DEC. 1, 1970. YOUR PERFORMANCE AS HEAD OF THAT SECRETARIAT MADE IT POSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT DYNAMICALLY THE FOREIGN POLICY FORMULAS ESTABLISHED BY THIS GOVERNMENT WHICH STRENGTHENED, WITHOUT DOUBT, THE AUTONOMY  
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AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRY. MEXICO COUNTSTODAY

BECAUSE OF ITS DECIDED PARTICIPATION IN THE SEARCH FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND THE CONCOMITANT DESIGN OF POLITICAL AND JURIDICAL INSTRUMENTS WHICH GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE STRUGGLE MOUNTED BY THE COUNTRIES OF THE THIRD WORLD. IN THIS STRUGGLE YOUR WORK HAS HAD SPECIAL RELEVANCE. ACCEPT MY RENEWED ASSURANCES OF GRATITUDE FOR THE EFFORT AND DEDICATION WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN TO THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY. WITH VERY CORDIAL GREETINGS. LUIS ECHEVERRIA"

3. FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS RESIGNATION TO NEWSMEN AT AN IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE, RABASA PRESENTED HIS SUCCESSOR, FORMER MEXICAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS AMB ALFONSO GARCIA ROBLES. AFTER THIS INTRODUCTION RABASA LEFT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND IT FELL UPON GARCIA ROBLES TO OFFER AN EXPLANATION FOR RABASA'S RESIGNATION. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT RABASA PLANNED TO RUN FOR SENATOR FOR THE STATE OF CHIAPAS OR POSSIBLY THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, AND GARCIA ROBLES NOTED THAT A PRECEDENT EXISTED IN THE CASE OF FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY MANUEL TELLO WHO RESIGNED FOR THE SAME REASON IN 1964. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU THINK RABASA RESIGNED BECAUSE OF ISRAEL", GARCIA ROBLES REPLIED, "YOU WILL HAVE TO ASK HIM THAT. THE ONLY THING I CAN SAY IS THAT I BELIEVE HE RESIGNED FOR THE SAME REASON AS MANUEL TELLO IN 1964."

4. REPORTERS QUESTION ABOVE AND EDITORIAL REACTION THIS MORNING EVIDENCE SUBSTANTIAL SKEPTICISM OVER STATED REASON FOR RABASA'S RESIGNATION AS DOES FACT THAT RABASA HIMSELF DID NOT OFFER THIS REASON. TREATMENT OF STORY IN GOVERNMENT-DIRECTED NACIONAL IS VERY SKIMPY WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT, BUT EDITORIAL AND COLUMNS IN INFLUENTIAL EXCELSIOR AS WELL AS EDITORIAL IN INDEPENDENT NOVEDADES SEEM TO TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT RABASA RESIGNED BECAUSE OF RECENT FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS (E.G. ANTI-ZIONISM VOTE IN UNGA, CONFUSED MEXICAN POSITION ON BELIZE) FOR WHICH RABASA (IN OUR VIEW UNFAIRLY) HAD COME UNDER STRONG ATTACK IN MEDIA. REASON OFFERED, I.E. THAT RABASA MAY RUN FOR SENATE, IS PLAUSIBLE AND THERE IS LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT CANDIDATE FOR SENATOR MUST LEAVE OFFICE SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO CANDIDACY. HOWEVER, AT THIS STAGE EMBASSY SHARES WIDE-CONFIDENTIAL

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SPREAD SKEPTICISM THAT THIS WAS REASON FOR RESIGNATION.

5. GARCIA ROBLES, IN CONTINUATION OF PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER RABASA'S DEPARTURE, WAS ASKED ABOUT THE COURSE OF FOREIGN POLICY UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP. HE REPLIED, "YOU KNOW THAT IT IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC WHO DIRECTS THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY." (THIS RESPONSE DIFFERS IN SUBSTANCE FROM ONE RECENTLY MADE BY RABASA TO A SIMILAR

QUESTION WHEN HE RECOGNIZED PRESIDENT'S CONTROL BUT CLAIMED SUBSTANTIAL POLICYMAKING ROLE FOR HIMSELF.) GARCIA ROBLES ADDED THAT THE CHANGE "DOES NOT SIGNIFY ANY MODIFICATION IN THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY." HE CITED A FEW TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY: NON-INTERVENTION, SELF-DETERMINATION, SOVEREIGN EQUALITY OF STATES, AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF CONTROVERSIES. HE REFUSED TO COMMENT ON POSSIBLE CHANGES AMONG SENIOR OFFICERS IN THE

SECRETARIAT AND SAID, "I KNOW WHO IS WHO BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT EACH ONE WANTS TO DO." (BIOGRAPHIC UPDATES ON GARCIA ROBLES WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPT. AS UN REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA ROBLES SEEMED TO FUNCTION WITH EXTRAORDINARY DEGREE OF AUTONOMY AND SEEMED TO HAVE DIRECT CHANNEL TO ECHEVERRIA.)

6. COMMENT: ACTUAL CAUSE OF RABASA RESIGNATION, IF NOT TO RUN FOR SENATOR WHICH WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT, IS NOT YET CLEAR. HOWEVER, FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD AS WELL AS COMMENTS MADE PRIVATELY TO EMBOFFS OVER PAST FEW MONTHS, IT SEEMS PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT RABASA WAS PLACED UNDER TREMENDOUS STRESS BY IMPULSIVE INITIATIVES OF PRESIDENT IN WHICH RABASA PLAYED NO REAL ADVISORY ROLE BUT SIMPLY HAD TASK OF IMPLEMENTING PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVES TO BEST OF HIS ABILITY. EXAMPLES WERE GOM ACTION ON ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION IN UNGA, ECHEVERRIA'S REQUEST THAT UNSC TAKE UP CASE OF SPAIN FOLLOWING EXECUTION OF SPANISH TERRORISTS, AND GOM FLIP-FLOP ON BELIZE ISSUE. CONSIDERING THE INCIDENTS OF THIS TYPE IN WHICH RABASA FAITHFULLY CARRIED OUT POLICIES HE ALMOST CERTAINLY CONSIDERED DUBIOUS, WE CANNOT BE SURE HE RESIGNED BECAUSE HE COULD NO LONGER CARRY OUT POLICIES WITH WHICH HE DID NOT AGREE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DECISION WAS MADE SOLELY BY THE PRESIDENT. OUR IMPRESSION HERE IS THAT GARCIA ROBLES THROUGH HIS ACTIONS MAY HAVE DEMONSTRATED GREATER AND

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PROBABLY MORE SINCERE AFFINITY FOR ECHEVERRIA'S POLICY INITIATIVES THAN DID RABASA DESPITE FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF LATTER.

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